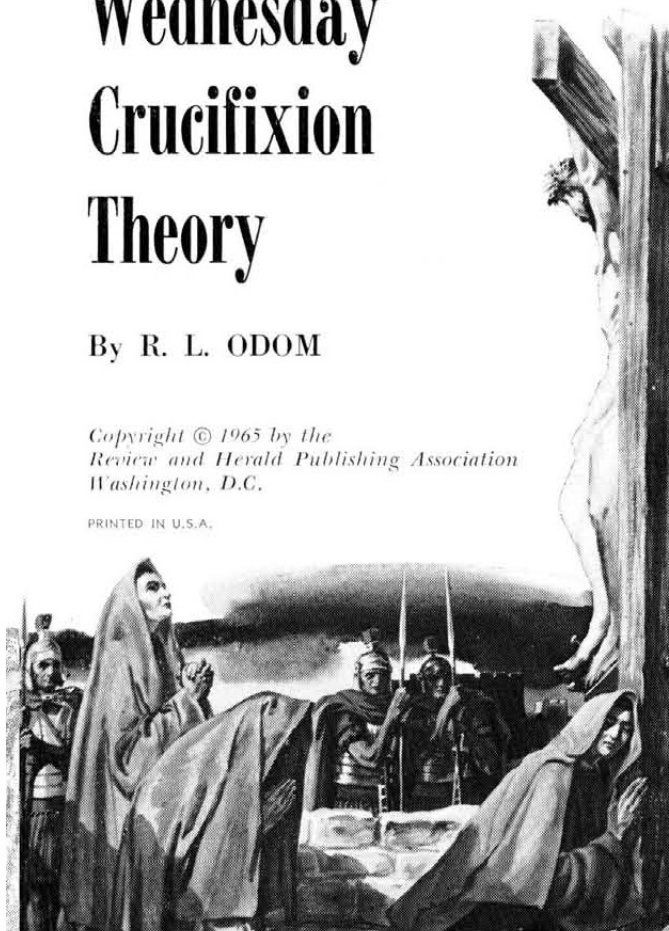


# The Wednesday Crucifixion Theory

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## *Was Christ Crucified on Wednesday?*

A FEW small, independent groups of professed Sabbathkeepers advocate the idea that Jesus died and was buried on Wednesday, that He remained in the tomb exactly seventy-two full hours, and that He rose from the grave on the Sabbath day. None of these groups are affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, though some of their adherents formerly were members. Seventh-day Adventists have never taught that our Lord died on Wednesday and was resurrected on the Sabbath. Through the years we have repeatedly exposed the fallacy of that doctrine, and have often warned our members against it. Nevertheless, now and then a few—a very few indeed—have become ensnared by it.

Proponents of the theory that Jesus died on Wednesday and rose from the tomb on the Sabbath base their argument chiefly on two statements of Scripture:

1. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40).

2. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. . . . And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not

here: for he is risen, as he said" (Matt. 28:1-6).

Advocates of the Wednesday-crucifixion theory assume that the phrase "three days and three nights" in Matthew 12:40 means that Christ was to stay in the tomb exactly seventy-two full hours, and that the phrase "the end of the sabbath" means that He rose from the grave on Sabbath afternoon. Hence they reason that if the resurrection occurred on Sabbath afternoon, it is a matter of simple arithmetic to count back seventy-two hours from that point to Wednesday afternoon as the time of Christ's burial. Thus they extend the period of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection over four calendar days: (1) a part of Wednesday, (2) all of Thursday, (3) all of Friday, and (4) a part of the Sabbath. According to this theory, Christ rose from the grave on the fourth day from that of His death, instead of "the third day" as the Bible teaches!

As we have said, the Wednesday-crucifixion theory is based principally on the two passages of Scripture cited. When, however, we take into consideration all that New Testament writers have recorded about the chronology of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, a much different picture emerges.

It is obvious that in Matthew 12:40 the word *day* in the expression "three days and three nights" does not mean a period of twenty-four hours, but the daylight portion of the twenty-four-hour day. Hebrew writers often mention both the light (day) and the dark (night) portions of the natural day in stating the number of calendar days involved in a historical happening. Moses followed this method in narrating the story of

the creation of our world, saying: "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5, etc.).

Moses similarly speaks of "forty days and forty nights" (Gen. 7:4, 12) in telling the number of calendar days involved in the downpour of rain at the time of the Flood. He uses the same expression in relating his stay with God in the mount on two occasions. (Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9, 11, 18, 25). The same method of reckoning time occurs in the report of Elijah's stay in Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). Jesus spent "forty days and forty nights" in the wilderness of temptation" (Matt. 4:2). Two other Bible writers speak of it simply as a period of "forty days" (Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2).

Job's friends were with him "seven days and seven nights" before they began their discussion with him (Job 2:13). The Egyptian slave was without food and water "three days and three nights" (1 Sam. 30:12, 13). Jonah was in the belly of the big fish for the same number of calendar days (Jonah 1:17; Matt. 12:40).

These statements make evident that the Bible writers were not attempting to define precisely the number of hours, minutes, and seconds of time involved. To the contrary, the expression "a day and a night" is simply idiomatic Hebrew meaning "one day." Moreover, in ancient Hebrew usage it was always customary to count any portion of a calendar day as a whole day, for chronological purposes, in stating the number of days involved in a particular event. This practice

is still in vogue among the Jews. One of the best known and most widely used Jewish reference works says:

"In Jewish communal life part of a day is at times reckoned as one day; e.g., the day of the funeral, even when the latter takes place late in the afternoon, is counted as the first of the seven days of mourning; a short time in the morning of the seventh day is counted as the seventh day; circumcision takes place on the eighth day, even though of the first day only a few minutes remained after the birth of the child, these being counted as one day. Again, a man who hears of a vow made by his wife or his daughter, and desires to cancel the vow, must do so on the same day on which he hears of it, as otherwise the protest has no effect; even if the hearing takes place a little time before night, the annulment must be done within that little time."—*The Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Day."

Another standard Jewish reference work states:

"In religious practices a part of a day is sometimes counted as a full day. Thus, in the case of the seven days of mourning, if the funeral takes place in the afternoon, the short portion of the day remaining is counted as a whole day; in the same way a very short part of the morning of the seventh day is considered to be a whole day. In reckoning the date of circumcision on the eighth day after birth, even a few minutes of the day that remains after the birth has taken place are considered to be a full day."—*The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Day."

This *inclusive* counting of a part of a natural

day as a whole calendar day by the Hebrew people must be taken into account in the study of the chronological statements of the Bible. For example, God said to Noah: "Yet *seven days*, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth" (Gen. 7:4). "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth" (verse 10). The marginal reading for verse 10 expresses more accurately the Hebrew text by saying that it was "on the seventh day" that the waters of the Flood came.

Hebrew law required every male baby to be circumcised when he was "eight days old" (Gen. 17:12). "In the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Lev. 12:3). John the Baptist was circumcised "on the eighth day" (Luke 1:59). In the case of the Messiah, "When eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus" (Luke 2:21). According to Hebrew inclusive reckoning, circumcision was to take place on the eighth calendar day, counted from and including the one on which he was born, regardless of the particular hour, minute, or second when the birth occurred.

In the case of Joseph's brothers, "he put them all together into ward three days. And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live" (Gen. 42:17, 18). The Hebrew reads literally: "On the third day."

According to the record of King Rehoboam's controversy with his subjects about taxation, "he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days" (2 Chron. 10:5). Then, "Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third

day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day" (verse 12). A parallel account reads: "And he [Rehoboam] said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me" (1 Kings 12:5). "So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day as the king had appointed" (verse 12). The expression "the third day" as used twice in verse 12 literally reads "on the third day" in the Hebrew text.

The idiomatic expressions "after three days," "yet for three days," and "the third day" were clearly understood by the Hebrews to mean "on the third day"—that is, on the third calendar day counting from and including the one on which King Rehoboam dismissed the petitioners.

When Queen Esther was informed by her kinsman of the plan to exterminate every Jew in Persia, she sent this message to him: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day" (Esther 4:16). And "it came to pass *on* the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel" and went to a banquet for the king in the hope of asking him to spare her people (chapter 5:1-8). In this case the "three days, night or day" (literally, "night and day") meant three calendar days. This is obvious from the fact that it was "on the third day" that the period of fasting ended.

Let us now apply the principles of Biblical chronology here illustrated to the story of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Intending to frighten Jesus into leaving town in a hurry, some Pharisees said to Him: "Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee"

(Luke 13:31). He replied: "Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (verses 32, 33). Here the expression "the third day" means three—and not four—calendar days.

At another time some Jews demanded of Jesus a sign, and He answered: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2:19-21).

Later, when Jesus was brought to trial, false witnesses testified: "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days" (Matt. 26:61). "We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands" (Mark 14:58). While He hung on the cross the scoffers cried out at Him: "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself" (Matt. 27:40). "Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross" (Mark 15:29, 30). On the day after Jesus was crucified the chief priests and Pharisees said to Pilate: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away" (Matt. 27:62-64).

Such idiomatic expressions as "in three days," "within three days," and "after three days" simply mean "until the third day." The Jewish leaders clearly understood that Jesus had meant that the day on which He would rise from the dead would be the third calendar day—and not the fourth—counted from, and including, that of His crucifixion. Here is Scripture testimony showing that such was the case.

After His ministry in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus told His disciples "that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day" (Matt. 16:21). Another account reports Him saying that He must "be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). Still another record quotes Him as saying that He must "be slain, and be raised the third day" (Luke 9:22). The Gospel writers thus make it clear that when Christ said that He would be raised to life "the third day" or "after three days," He meant three calendar days—not four—counted from and including that of His crucifixion.

Not long after His transfiguration Jesus said to the disciples: "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again" (Matt. 17:22, 23). Another account quotes Him as saying that "after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day" (Mark 9:31). This testimony also makes it clear that the day on which Christ would rise from the dead would be the third—not the fourth—counted from and including that of the crucifixion.

As the event foretold drew nearer, Jesus said to His followers again: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. 20:18, 19). Another Gospel writer quotes Him as saying that "they . . . shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Mark 10:33, 34). A third account records that He said they would "put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again" (Luke 18:32, 33). Thus for the third time the Lord declared in unmistakable language that the day on which He would rise from the dead would be "the third day"—not the fourth—from, and including, the one on which He would be crucified.

Considered in the light of these eight other statements by our Lord Himself, the statement in Matthew 12:40 simply means that, in accord with idiomatic Hebrew usage and their custom of counting time *inclusively*, three calendar days—not four—were involved in the period from His death to His resurrection, without pinpointing the exact number of hours, minutes, and seconds.

### *Did Christ Rise on Sabbath or Sunday?*

**A**DVOCATES of the theory that Jesus died on Wednesday and rose from the grave on the Sabbath point to Matthew 28:1-6 in support of their position: "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of

the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. . . . And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said." On the basis of this scripture, the Wednesday crucifixionists claim that the two Marys went to the sepulcher on Sabbath afternoon—"in the end of the sabbath"—and were told that Jesus had already risen from the dead. They reason, therefore, that the Saviour's resurrection could not have taken place on Sunday morning, but must have occurred not long before the two women went to the tomb Sabbath afternoon. Is this argument as sound as it appears to be?

The point of issue in this passage of scripture is the meaning of the Greek term *opse*, translated in the King James Version as "in the end of." In classical Greek *opse* meant, primarily, "late in" or "late on." However, by the time of Christ and the apostles *opse* had acquired at least two other meanings, particularly in the commonly used Greek of that period. One of these meanings is "after," and various recent English translations have so rendered the term. For instance, the Revised Standard Version of Matthew 28:1 begins: "Now after the sabbath." The other meaning was "even" (or "evening," as in the Revised Standard Version), that is, the first watch of the night. The Greeks, Romans, and Jews in the time of Christ and the apostles divided the night into four watches. The second, third, and fourth watches are specifically mentioned and enumerated in Luke 12:38; Mark 6:48; and Matthew 14:25. Jesus enumerated all four of them in chronologi-

cal order in this statement: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even [*opse*], or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning" (Mark 13:35).

The problem in Matthew 28:1, then, is one of determining which English translation of the Greek word *opse* is correct in that context. In his *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (p. 646) A. T. Robertson notes that the meaning of *opse* in Matthew 28:1 "is a point for exegesis, not for grammar, to decide."

Now, Seventh-day Adventists recognize the principle that obscure passages of Scripture should be interpreted in harmony with those which are unmistakably clear on the subject under consideration. Inasmuch as the other three Gospels explicitly locate the visit of the two Marys to the sepulcher "very early in the morning the first day of the week," *opse* in Matthew 28:1 should evidently be rendered "after."

### The Passover and the Crucifixion

The chronological relationship between the Passover and the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus has an important bearing on the problem. "It was the preparation of the passover" when Jesus was crucified (John 19:14). The preparation of the Passover lamb by killing it, dressing it, and roasting it for the Passover supper took place on Nisan (Abib) 14, before the sunset marking the end of that day. (See Ex. 12: 2-6; 13:4; 34:18; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16; Deut. 16:1-7.) The Passover meal, consisting of the roasted lamb, bitter herbs, and unleavened

bread, was eaten at night on Nisan 15, after the sunset that marked the close of Nisan 14.

The fact that "it was the preparation of the passover" (John 19:14) when Jesus was crucified is evidence that He, as the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Cor. 5:7), died on Nisan 14. The Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 43a (Soncino edition, p. 281) relates that "on the eve of Passover Yeshu [Jesus] was hanged. . . . Since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of Passover." This statement is thought to refer to Jesus of Nazareth.

Further evidence is the fact that when the Jews took Jesus to Pilate for trial, they themselves "went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28). This shows that the Jews, in general at least, had not yet eaten the Passover meal when they took Jesus before the Roman governor. This is consistent with the statement that Christ met with His disciples in the upper chamber to wash their feet and to eat the Passover supper with them "before the feast of the passover" (John 13:1). Among the Jews, Nisan 15 has been pre-eminently "the Passover," because they eat the Passover supper in the night (fore part) of that day. When the Bible speaks of *killing* or roasting the Passover, it refers primarily to Nisan 14; but when it speaks of *eating* the Passover it refers to Nisan 15.

Inasmuch as Jesus would be nailed to the cross during the afternoon of Nisan 14, "the preparation of the passover" (John 19:14), and would be lying in the tomb during the ensuing night of



Nisan 15, when the Jews in general would be eating their Passover supper, He ate the Passover supper with His disciples on the preceding night—that of Nisan 14—and before the people in general did. At the same time, He instituted the Lord's Supper by eating it with the disciples before the event it was to commemorate occurred. He did this because He would not be able to eat the Lord's Supper with them while He was hanging on the cross or lying in the tomb.

While the Gospels inform us that it was after the ninth hour (mid-afternoon) that Christ died (Matt. 27:45, 46; Mark 15:33, 34; Luke 23:44), they do not pinpoint the time precisely. However, they do specify the day of the week on which His death occurred. He died on Friday, which the Jews called the "preparation, . . . the day before the Sabbath," for on the sixth day the necessary preparations were to be made for observing the seventh day, the weekly Sabbath (Mark 15:42; cf. Ex. 16:22-26; Luke 23:54).

"The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day (for that sabbath day was a high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31). It was "a high day" because a yearly sabbath—Nisan 15 (Lev. 23:6, 7)—fell on the weekly Sabbath, making that day doubly holy.

"When the even was come, because it was preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, . . . went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus" (Mark 15:42, 43). The request

was granted, and Joseph, with the help of other believers, buried the body of our Lord. "And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on" (Luke 23:54). Thus Jesus died and was buried on Friday afternoon, before the sunset marking the beginning of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week.

When Jesus' followers had buried Him, they "returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56). According to the commandment, "the seventh day is the sabbath" (Ex. 20:8-11). Then, "*after the sabbath*, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre" (Matt. 28:1, R.S.V.).

This rendering of the text in question agrees with the testimony of the other Gospel writers. For "*when the sabbath was past*, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning *the first day of the week*, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun" (Mark 16:1, 2). Then it was that the angel said to them, "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here" (verse 6).

### The Testimony of Luke

Luke's testimony concurs with that of Mark: "Now *upon the first day of the week*, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared" (Luke 24:1). As in Mark they were told: "He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake



unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and *the third day rise again*" (verse 6, 7). The angels here emphasize Christ's prediction that His resurrection would take place on the third day—not the fourth—from that of His death.

Mary Magdalene immediately reported to the apostles that Christ's body was missing, and Peter and John raced to the tomb, to find that her story was true. (See Luke 24:10-12; John 20:1-10.) After the two apostles had returned to their abode, Mary lingered and wept at the tomb, because she thought that someone had taken the body away. It was at this time that Jesus appeared to her (verses 11-17).

That the resurrection itself took place on the first day of the week, not the seventh, is plainly stated in Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene." The Greek text literally reads: "But having risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary the Magdalene." On the other hand, *not one Bible text* says that Jesus rose on the Sabbath day!

After reporting that the women went to the tomb "upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning" (Luke 24:1), the Bible adds that two disciples "went *that same day* to a village called Emmaus" (verse 13). This was late in the afternoon of that same Sunday, for in their conversation with Him they said: "Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them" (verse 29).

On the way to Emmaus the two men recounted to Jesus, whom they had not recognized, "how the chief priests and our rulers . . . crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, *today is the third day* since these things were done" (verses 20, 21).

That first day of the week was "the third day"—not the fourth—counting from and including the one on which the Saviour had died. How could those two disciples have said that the first day of the week was "the third day since these things were done" if Jesus had died on the preceding Wednesday, which was five days before by Jewish reckoning?

When Jesus met with His apostles at the close of that first day of the week, He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead *the third day*" (verse 46). Thus He reiterated the fact that His resurrection took place on "the third day"—not the fourth—counting from and including the one on which He died.

Years later Peter declared that "God raised [Jesus] up *the third day*" (Acts 10:39, 40). Paul likewise declared that "he rose again *the third day* according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3, 4).

### The Principles of Inclusive Reckoning

If the New Testament writers had meant to convey the idea that Christ lay in the tomb 72 full hours, over a period of four calendar days, then they would have spoken of that period as "four days" and not "three days," and of His res-

urrection as having occurred on the fourth day, not the third. A good illustration of the way the Jews of New Testament times counted time occurs in the story of Cornelius. Note the following:

1. An angel appeared to Cornelius in Caesarea at "*about the ninth hour of the day*"—approximately 3:00 P.M.—and told him to send for Peter at Joppa to come and instruct him (Acts 10:1-8).

2. "*On the morrow . . . Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour*"—at approximately noon. As soon as he had finished praying, the messengers from Cornelius appeared at the gate of the house and called for the apostle [verses 9-22]. "Then called he [Peter] them in, and lodged them" (verse 23).

3. "And *on the morrow* Peter went away with them (verse 23).

4. "And *the morrow after* they entered into Caesarea." Peter and his companions went to the home of Cornelius, who explained to the apostle: "*Four days ago* I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing" (verses 24-33).

The period of time from the hour when the angel appeared to Cornelius till he personally related the story to Peter, at about the same time of day, was approximately 72 hours. That period of time was idiomatically spoken of as "four days," not "three days," because it involved *four calendar days*.

The New Testament declares *13 times* that the day on which Christ rose from the dead was

"the third day"—counting from and including the one on which He died (Matt. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Mark 9:31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4). *Not once* do they say that He rose on the fourth day from the one on which His death occurred.

Without the slightest shadow of a doubt, therefore, we know that Christ died on Friday, the sixth day of the week; rested in the tomb during the whole of the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week; and rose from the grave on Sunday, the first day of the week. That is what Christ Himself taught, what the four writers of the four Gospels recorded, what Peter and Paul preached, and what Seventh-day Adventists believe and have always believed.

### *Does Ellen G. White Support the Wednesday Crucifixion Theory?*

**O**CCASIONALLY somebody, zealously bent on persuading Seventh-day Adventists to accept the doctrine that Jesus died on Wednesday and rose from the dead on the Sabbath, attempts to do this by using the writings of Ellen G. White, an esteemed pioneer writer among us. For example, one document circulated for that purpose either quotes or refers to Ellen G. White's book *The Desire of Ages* 73 times in the effort to make it appear that she taught that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, re-

mained in the tomb precisely 72 hours, and rose from the tomb on the Sabbath day. The facts are that Mrs. White never set forth such an idea. It is interesting to note that the writer of the document failed to quote this statement from page 794 of *The Desire of Ages*, concerning Christ's disciples:

"On the sixth day of the week they had seen their Master die; on the first day of the next week they found themselves deprived of His body, and they were accused of having stolen it away for the sake of deceiving the people."

"The sixth day of the week" certainly could not have been Wednesday, the fourth day of the week.

On page 769 of the same volume we read further:

"At last Jesus was at rest. The long day of shame and torture was ended. As the last rays of the setting sun ushered in the Sabbath, the Son of God lay in quietude in Joseph's tomb. His work completed, His hands folded in peace, He rested through the sacred hours of the Sabbath day."

Note that Jesus rested in the tomb "through the sacred hours of the Sabbath day," not through the hours of Thursday and Friday.

Again we read on page 779: "The night of the first day of the week had worn slowly away. The darkest hour, just before daybreak, had come. Christ was still a prisoner in His narrow tomb. The great stone was in its place; the Roman seal was unbroken; the Roman guards were keeping their watch." Following this is a graphic description of the Saviour's resurrection early the first day of the week.

Evidently, Christ was still in the grave, the great stone had not been moved, the Roman seal upon it had not been broken, and the Roman soldiers were still guarding the burial site, just before daybreak on the first day of the week.

These statements in *The Desire of Ages*, published in 1898, are consistent with those of another book by Mrs. White 20 years before:

"Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day, and when holy beings of both Heaven and earth were astir on the morning of the first day of the week, He rose from the grave to renew His work of teaching His disciples. But this fact does not consecrate the first day of the week, and make it a Sabbath."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 204 (1878).

### *The Desire of Ages in Harmony With Bible*

According to Luke 24:1, it was "upon the *first day of the week*" that certain women went to the sepulcher and found that the Lord was not there. An angel explained to them why He was not there, saying: "He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (verses 6, 7). This the women reported to the disciples.

"And, behold, two of them went *that same day* to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs" (verse 13). On this passage Mrs. White comments: "Late in the afternoon of *the day of the resurrection*, two of the disciples were on their way to Emmaus, a little town eight miles from Jerusalem."—*The*

*Desire of Ages*, p. 795. A comparison of the italicized portions of these statements makes clear that *The Desire of Ages* statements are fully in harmony with the Bible narrative.

Some advocates of the theory that Christ died on Wednesday and rose on Sabbath allege that Ellen G. White's statements concerning His pre-Passover rest in Bethany and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem are not in chronological agreement with her above-quoted statements that He died on the sixth day of the week, lay in the tomb on the seventh day of the week, and rose from the grave on the first day of the week. According to the Scriptures, Jesus came to Bethany "six days before the passover" (John 12:1). Mrs. White comments:

"The Saviour had reached Bethany only six days before the Passover, and according to His custom had sought rest at the home of Lazarus. The crowds of travelers who passed on to the city spread the tidings that He was on His way to Jerusalem, and that He would rest over the Sabbath at Bethany."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 557. (See also *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 372.)

"It was on the first day of the week that Christ made his triumphant entry into Jerusalem."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 569. (See also *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 383.)

The count of the days as given in the above statements from the Bible and Mrs. White is as follows:

1. Nisan 8, Sabbath—Rested at Bethany
2. Nisan 9, Sunday—Entered Jerusalem
3. Nisan 10, Monday—
4. Nisan 11, Tuesday—

5. Nisan 12, Wednesday—
6. Nisan 13, Thursday—
7. Nisan 14, Friday—Died on Cross
8. Nisan 15, Sabbath—Lay in Tomb
9. Nisan 16, Sunday—Rose From Grave

The Jews in Christ's time reckoned the 24-hour day from sunset to sunset, not from midnight to midnight. Nisan 14 began, therefore, at the sunset marking the close of Thursday afternoon. During the night (or forepart) of Nisan 14, the sixth day of the week, Jesus ate the Passover supper with His disciples. The following morning (or latter part) of Nisan 14 He was crucified, and in the afternoon of the same day He was buried a little before sunset, marking the beginning of the seventh-day Sabbath. Early in the morning of the first day of the week He rose triumphantly from the grave.

This simple tabulation of the days indicates that Mrs. White's comments are in complete harmony with the statement by John, and with the generally accepted view that Christ was at Bethany six days before the Passover festivities began on Nisan 14 (see *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 233, 1020).

This count is based on the understanding that the term "Passover" as used in John 11:55 and 12:1 refers to the entire paschal season, which began with the slaying of the Passover lamb on Nisan 14. In the year of the crucifixion, as we understand the Biblical chronology, Nisan 14 fell on the sixth day of the week, which began at the sunset Thursday evening and ended at the sunset Friday evening. Jesus met with His disciples after sundown on that Thursday evening, washed

their feet, and ate the Passover supper with them, prior to His death as the antitypical paschal lamb (1 Cor. 5:7) and to the time when the Jews in general ate the Passover (John 13:1; 18:28; 19:14).

There is no contradiction between Mrs. White's statements and those of the Bible writers. There is no support in either the Bible or her writings for the Wednesday crucifixion and Sabbath resurrection theory. This erroneous theory is based on a misconception of the meaning of the expression "three days and three nights," as it is used in the Bible, and on the wishful thinking of those who, innocently no doubt, advocate it. A contributing factor is the admitted difficulty in reconciling the chronology of John with that of the Synoptic Gospels.

Those who think that they have found "new light" for the church would do well to follow this counsel penned by Ellen G. White:

"There are a thousand temptations in disguise prepared for those who have the light of truth; and the only safety for any of us is in receiving no new doctrine, no new interpretation of the Scriptures, without first submitting it to brethren of experience. Lay it before them in a humble, teachable spirit, with earnest prayer; and if they see no light in it, yield to their judgment; for 'in the multitude of counselors there is safety.'"—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 293.